

FACT SHEET



St. Louis Air Quality Plans

January 2003

Background

The St. Louis area (encompassing Madison, Monroe and St. Clair Counties in Illinois; and Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Louis Counties, and the City of St. Louis in Missouri) was designated nonattainment with respect to the 1-hour ozone standard in 1978. In 1991, the area was classified as a "moderate" nonattainment area. In December 2002, the states of Missouri and Illinois submitted requests to EPA to redesignate the St. Louis area to an attainment area for the 1-hour ozone standard.

Today's Actions

EPA is taking three actions today. The first action proposes to find that the area has attained the 1-hour ozone standard. This finding is based on air quality measured during 2000, 2001, and 2002. This same action also proposes to approve requests from the states of Missouri and Illinois to redesignate the St. Louis area to an attainment area with regard to the 1-hour ozone standard. The redesignation request includes a plan to assure air quality continues to meet the 1-hour standard, a demonstration that the area meets the relevant Clean Air Act requirements, and a demonstration that air quality improvements are based on permanent emission reduction measures. These control measures include tighter Federal standards for new vehicles, low volatility and cleaner gasoline, a more stringent vehicle inspection and

maintenance program, controls on area sources, and the adoption of tighter emission limits on existing stationary sources. In conjunction with the proposed redesignation, we are proposing to approve revisions to the Missouri vehicle inspection and maintenance plan.

The last action is a final rule reclassifying the St. Louis area to a "serious" nonattainment area in accordance with a recent court ruling.

Court Ruling

On November 25, 2002, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit issued a ruling that EPA did not have legal authority to avoid reclassifying the St. Louis area to "serious" nonattainment by allowing St. Louis additional time to meet the ozone standard because of transported pollution from other states. The Court remanded the case to EPA to enter a final action reclassifying St. Louis as a "serious" nonattainment area, effective immediately.

In compliance with the Court's ruling, we are today taking final action to change St. Louis's official classification from "moderate" to "serious". We are also establishing a new deadline (one year from publication of the notice) for Missouri and Illinois to submit the "serious" area requirements to EPA.

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A reclassification means the area will have to implement within 1 year the additional local control measures required of a “serious” area. However, if, upon consideration of public comments concerning the redesignation, EPA decides to redesignate the area to attainment status, the states would no longer be required to address the additional control measures required of a serious nonattainment area.

Cleaner Air in St. Louis

The area’s effort to achieve attainment of the 1-hour ozone standard in St. Louis is a significant accomplishment. However, it is only one milestone on the road to achieving cleaner air in the St. Louis area. Implementation of the 8-hour ozone and the fine particulate standards is beginning. Additional pollution reductions will likely be necessary in St. Louis to achieve all of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

For More Information

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